# Conversation Guide: Harassment Reporting Landing Page & Poster

## Warm-up Questions - 5-15 minutes (depending on whether show poster)

*NOTE how to share URL: dictate / Zoom chat / email / text*

Let’s start with a question...

I'd like you to imagine that you or a friend went to a VA medical clinic today for a doctor's appointment, and on the way in, a person said something rude and made a sexual gesture that made you or your friend feel uncomfortable. You or your friend think more about what happened and decide to report it to hopefully prevent it from happening to other people. What do you think you or your friend would do? If we decided to report it, I would probably go to the front desk of my appointment and let them know what happened.

*(don't / report it / talk with someone/police at VA / call 911 / google)*

* Can you tell me more about why? Probably just go back into my appointment and tell my nurse or provider. Honestly, I would probably not report that, but if it made my friend uncomfortable, I would report.
* Why would you not report it? Because it happens a lot, especially as a female. I have learned to let it roll off my back. I am also thinking of it as nothing major.
* What do you think you or your friend would do next?
  + *(Google / Facebook / MHV / eBenefits / Contact center call or email / VA.gov / In person / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)*

### For sighted participants

Say that while you were at VA, you saw a poster about reporting harassment, but you're no longer there. How would you find information about reporting harassment now? I would probably Google it or go to the VA website.

What information would you look up online? VA.gov or my certain VA hospital that I go to and look up the rep who would deal with information like this.

* *(ask someone / google it? / VA.gov? / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)*

### For sighted participants on desktop

Now I'd like to show you a poster and get your feedback on it. *(share my screen with poster and give mouse control to participant so they can move around)*

* What are your initial impressions? I believe it is pretty clear cut on what you should do. My initial reaction was oh call 911. I wouldn’t result to that, but a sexual assault is something different. I like how it is bolded. I think this is a great resource.
* *(Note especially any sentiments/feelings they express re safety, comfort, trust, confidentiality)*
* *(Pause to allow as much time as the participant wants to read/process the poster)*
* What do you think you or your friend would do next if you wanted to report the interaction I described earlier--a person said something rude to you and made a sexual gesture that made you feel uncomfortable? That is what it is call a patient advocate! If I am at the VA I would go to the front desk and ask to talk to the patient advocate.
* How would you get in contact with patient advocate?
* Which number would you call?
* If you were still at the facility, how would you decide how to report it? If I was at the VA I would either tell the police or talk to the front desk before calling the 800 number.
  + *(call 911 / call 800 # / talk to patient advocate / police / building security / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)*
* What other thoughts do you have about this poster? I think it is great it lists all you can go to this way to report the situation to. And the big, bolded hotline number. I like the poster.

### For participants using a screen reader

Say that while you were at VA, someone mentioned that you could report harassment, but you're no longer there. How would you find information about reporting harassment now?

* *(ask someone / google it? / VA.gov? / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)*

What assistive technology are you using today?

How would you rate your level of experience with using a screen reader--beginner, intermediate, advanced, or expert?

How long have you been using a screen reader?

Are you wearing headphones today? I'm asking so I will be able to hear your screen reader during the session.

* ***(if on desktop)*** Could you please share your audio with me on Zoom?
* ***(if on mobile)*** Would it be possible for you to take them off and use your computer or mobile audio?

## Start screen sharing

Are you OK continuing with the session? We can take a break if you want to.

I'm going to share with you a web page. While you're looking at it, I would like you to *talk aloud* as much as possible so that you share what you're thinking, what you're doing, what you like, what you dislike, and what you're unsure about.

I would like you to share your screen with me so I can watch you use the web page in your web browser. *(refer to Screen sharing instructions above, if needed)*

What kind of device are you using today? *(Phone / Computer) Computer*

I'm going to (spell/put into the Zoom chat) a link for you to open (<https://staging.va.gov/hrt>). *(If asked, reassure that this is a legitimate link to what I want you to test.)*

Do you see the link?

Let me give you the url. It is the word staging.va.gov/hrt yes now you can do that.

## Veteran Tasks

### Task 1: [Explore landing page] - 15 minutes

***(for everyone)*** Let's say that you found this page on VA.gov.

What are your initial impressions of this page? As soon as you get past the first paragraph it gives you a blanket what to do. You do not have to search for a number. Everything is listed for me. As I scroll down it gives more resources. I like they give the definition on what harassment is because I do not think a lot of people know what it is. I like that give you a heads up on what to expect when reporting and after you are reporting. I like that it also tells you that you do not have to give your name because I wouldn’t want to give my name for safety issues.

Why would you want to remain anonymous? Yes, for safety issues. The VA system is smaller than we really think it is. As a woman it is harder for us to complain/report something due to my reputation getting destroyed. I have seen the victim getting turned into the problem.

By keeping your name off it you see yourself being able to avoid all that. Yes, I do. I never had to deal with that. I think as a woman it is hard, and even as a gay male to have the option to be able to not have to give our name.

* *(Note especially any sentiments/feelings they express re safety, comfort, trust, confidentiality)*
* *(Pause to allow as much time as the participant wants to read/process the page)*

What do you think you or your friend would do next if they wanted to report the interaction I described earlier--a person said something rude and made a sexual gesture that made you or your friend feel uncomfortable? I would probably note the time and place of where it occurred because I know VA has camera. My brain goes to getting proof to valid my report. I want the person to know what they did was not okay.

I was wondering how you would report it then? I feel like if you don’t do it right then and there you would lose all the proof/information you would need. You need to report in person, or you may not be able to get the person who did it to you. Even if you were reporting on site you would want to know your location so you can have more proof. This way it would be able to weed out who it could have been to get them help if they suffer with any kind of illness.

What kind of method would you use to report it? If it was something important to report, I would go to patient advocate.

When you say following you, do you mean that day? *(call 911 / call VA police / call 800 # / in person / call at a VA health facility / Vet Center / regional office / national cemetery / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)*

What do you think will happen next? I would expect the patient advocate to go look for the person and get their side of the story.

Anything else? Would you be involved at all? I would want a follow up if it was major. If it was catcalling, I would be annoyed but not really needing a follow up.

What other thoughts do you have about this page? I think it is a really good format. It gets you there quickly. Everything that needs to be bolded is bolded. I think it is straight forward, and all the details are very important. I like it gives you examples of what harassment is. I wouldn’t change anything about it.

I am interested in how you are reading the page, are you reading the words under the headers? I was focusing on the headers. I am a quick reader. I like the spacing to make it easier to quick read. If I was going to report, I would read more.

You mention the phone number, look at the information about reporting by phone. What do you think of that information? I like that it tells you exactly when they are there, the hearing loss information is important, the hyperlink is there so I can click, and it would call. The only thing would be a 24-hour line, but I know that is hard to manage.

Can you give me more information on the 24-hour line? I think it would be nice to have, but I would envision it be nationwide and how would the information be filtered down. I do not think it is necessary to have it open 24 hours for harassment, but if it is sexual assault, I would call 911. If it was a sexual assault, I wouldn’t even bother with the 1800 number.

If you were reporting something, you would be willing to look at the time and report it within that time frame? Yes, that is pretty standard business hours.

Feedback on the information in it?

* Feedback on how the information is organized?

**Post-Task Interview - 15 minutes**

*Type into #feedback-backchannel: "Any questions you want me to ask?"*

What thoughts do you have about what you've reviewed today?

* What was *helpful* about what you've reviewed today? I think they are easy to read and easy to follow. There are a lot of hyperlinks to follow. The spacing makes it easier to read. Both website and poster are easy to read. The bolding of information screams at you on what you need to do. Especially this first how to quickly get help, you just have to click on it and get the information.
* When you say easy to click are you talking about the phone number? Yes, I would more than likely be on my phone, and they make it easier to call by just clicking on the link. Even that they give you a number to text. Some people do not like talking and would rather text. That stood out to me because I saw the number and right next to it say text. It stood out in that blue box.
* What was *not* helpful about what you've reviewed today? I can’t think of anything that is not helpful. This is my first time viewing this page. I can’t think of anything. I think the information is laid out really nicely.
* What would you like to *change* about what you've reviewed today? I would like to see more posters, especially in bathrooms. Maybe in the back of the stalls. Honestly these posters could be hanging up in the VAs and I would not know.
* Have you been to a VA recently? No not recently.
* These are just new resources, so they are not out. I was curious if you ever saw anything similar to these. I am thinking more of when I was active duty. It gives you all the information you need. I think your poster gives more information than what I remember. Like what to do, what the process is, all that information is on the website you provided.

We would like the harassment reporting resources to meet the needs of ALL Veterans who may have been harassed at a VA site. If you've ever experienced any type of harassment at VA, and are willing to share, we would like to know a little more about your experiences. I'm not asking for details, and I don't want you to re-live these difficult experiences. Your feedback today has been valuable, even if you decide to not answer the questions I'm about to ask. If you share anything about your experiences or someone else's with me, what you say will remain confidential. Are you comfortable if I ask a few more questions? Yes.

* Have you or anyone you know ever been made to feel uncomfortable by someone else at VA while applying for, using, or communicating about your VA benefits or health care? This could be in person, over the phone, or in an email or text message. And it could be a range of things, like someone whistling or making sexual comments, making negative comments about gender, race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation, giving unwanted attention, or making inappropriate gestures. You don't need to share any details, you can stop at any time, or you could skip this question. *(yes / no / decline to answer)* Yes. Just to clarify sexual or in general. Anything.
* If you or your friend was harassed, was it reported? *(no / yes) No*
* If so, *how* was it reported? *(phone call / in person / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)*
* If it wasn't reported, what were the barriers to reporting it? For me personally it is just bringing attention to being a female. A lot of the experience I have felt is just related to me being a female. Being felt as if I was less than even when I have done more. I would feel weak for reporting even though it is something strong you can do.
* You don’t sound like you are judging others for reporting, but you are judging yourself if you ever did. Yeah. I would just chalk it up to boys being boys and give them a piece of my mind. Making me feel less because I am a woman. You sit down next to someone in the waiting room, and they ask where your husband is. Trying to make me feel less than.
* Trying to undercut you? Yes. I have been asked where my husband is all the time. Once I told someone I was 100% and a worker asked me who I had to do to get that. That is the majority about what I have experience. I don’t really even talk to my husband about my service. I think a lot of women feel this way. I always minimize my accomplishments due to reactions of others.
* You stated you were laughed at by a worker about your disability, was that a employee? Yes, by a VA employee

How would you prefer to report any future harassment? *(phone call / in person / online somehow / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) When I think about it I would handle it right then and there because if you leave I believe it would make reporting it harder to find the individual that was harassing me. I want that issue handled right then.*

*Because the person you are talking about could still be there? Yes. Especially if it was an assault. I wouldn’t want them to be able to do that to anyone else.*

*(If they share anything about a harassment experience, say...)*

* I am sorry you (or your friend) had this experience. We appreciate you sharing this with us. Your story will inform how we provide resources to help Veterans in the future.
* If you (or your friend) want to report your experience with harassment, that can be done in person at a VA site or by calling the VA Inspector General Hotline at 800-488-8244.

Is there anything else that we haven't talked about that you think I should know? No, I think the main thing is getting people comfortable with reporting things. I think the things that should be addressed do not get reported because of fear of what would happen to the reporter.

Does this go back to you wanting to report anonymously? Yes, I think so. If someone assaulted me, I would want everyone to know to get it out there. If it was catcalling, I would just not want my name to be part of it because I don’t want to be labeled by people.

Where does this being tough come from? The Marines? Yes, and I was very much raised that way. You do not talk about it. And I am an overthinker. I would have to overly think about it to ensure that they meant to do/made me feel uncomfortable before I would feel comfortable reporting. I would not want to use resources it they are not needed. I would not want to waste their/my time and energy. I want to ensure I felt greatly victimized before reporting it. If someone said something outlandish things then I think they need to be addressed, and sexual assault I would definitely report them.

## Thank You and Closing - 5 minutes

We really appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts with us today. Your feedback is so helpful to us as we continue to work on providing resources for reporting harassment. We're hoping that by providing such resources, we can make VA safer for everyone.

I'm going to stop the recording now. *(STOP recording)*

Before we end this session, are there any questions or concerns that you wanted to express? No.

Thank you so much again!

*(if this session didn't appear to trigger a traumatic response)* And I hope you enjoy the rest of your day!